



MUAA Podcast 1- Courtney Charles

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SPEAKERS

Kasey Stevens, Larry Crum, Matt Hayes, Courtney Charles



Kasey Stevens 00:04

Hello, and welcome to the One of the Herd podcast, the official podcast of the Marshall University Alumni Association. Today, on our pilot episode, we'll hear from one of our alums Courtney Charles, who currently serves as the vice president of basketball in franchise operations of the Raptors 905, the NBA affiliate of the Toronto Raptors. Before we get to Courtney's interview, let's check in with our Alumni Association staff for an update of what's new on campus. You can see it when you visit campus, the new buildings the new landmarks the new students, Marshall is on an upward trajectory thanks to the generosity and helping hands of alumni and supporters just like you. Marshall rises is an exciting new era for Marshall University. This game changing campaign supports five key pillars at our university, including enhancing the student experience, strengthening community partnerships, fostering an environment of innovative learning and expanding academics for all Marshall students. Each of these pillars help strengthen our students through scholarships, retaining and recruiting and talented faculty increased research opportunities and through new and renovated facilities. Learn more about how you can get involved at www.marshall.edu/rises. Because of you, Marshall is on the rise. Welcome to the Marshall University Alumni Association One of the Herd podcast we are so excited you have joined us today. My name is Kasey Stevens and I work in the Office of Alumni Relations. Today we are joined by Matt Hayes and Larry Crum. And I will let them introduce themselves.



Larry Crum 01:51

Hey, everybody, this is Larry Crum, Associate Director of the Alumni Relations staff, excited to put together a podcast for everyone.



Matt Hayes 01:59

My name is Matt Hayes, I'm the executive director of alumni relations were excited for this opportunity in it What a great chance to share when engaged with the Marshall community. You know, this, this podcast has been a long time coming. We're really excited to be here.



Kasey Stevens 02:15

Fantastic. And we just wanted to start off the podcast with giving you guys a few updates with what's going on on campus. So guys, one of the most incredible things that has happened this year so far is our new football coach Charles Huff. What do you guys think about him so far? The impact he's making?



Larry Crum 02:33

Well, I mean, so far, it's been pretty, pretty exciting seeing him out in the community, meeting with folks. He's just been, he's been everywhere. He's done everything you're supposed to do. And from what I understand a lot of that's being driven by him. I mean, he's just a legit guy coming in here, getting to know everyone and getting this thundering herd football program off on the right foot.



Matt Hayes 02:52

He has sure hit the ground running that that is for certain. And he's brought an energy that's just infectious. It is permeating every area of campus. And everybody's excited. So anticipation and expectation levels are high right now go look in toward the fall of 2021.



Larry Crum 03:09

I mean, I don't know if you saw that. The introductory press conference he did. Holy cow. He wild everyone. Everyone was watching that thing going, this is our guy. This is really a guy we want leaving our program. Absolutely.



Kasey Stevens 03:21

And I love that every photo of him on social media is him giving a big smile on a thumbs up wherever he is.



Matt Hayes 03:27

Tons of personality!



Kasey Stevens 03:29

So speaking of football, we have a pretty tough schedule coming up this fall. Our first game is at Navy. And we've got ECU on the docket, as well as a full state of fleet of conference games. But we also play at Appalachian State. What do you guys think of that?



Matt Hayes 03:45

Well, I just want to say I'm excited for the chance to have another matchup with ECU, especially, you know, this year, it'll be the 50th anniversary of the young thundering herd, you know, so to celebrate these guys and significant contributions, they have made our football programs, our university, but to do it around the time when we're playing at ease or having a game with ECU. That's just that's so awesome. I'm so excited. And looking forward to it.



Larry Crum 04:13

That's the one I had circled. I mean, these Carolina, I was so excited for us to play them last year. And it was just such a shame that we didn't get to actually go down there and play that game. And you know, we're gonna have them up here this year. And Appalachian State that was a great game last year meant a lot for us. And we're going to be going down there and playing them. And then of course, our usual slate of conference games. It's tough. I mean, that conference is getting tougher and tougher. There's a lot of really good teams that we're gonna be playing at home. We're excited about having Western Kentucky and Florida Atlantic. I mean, some really tough games at home. And, yeah, it's just gonna be an interesting year



Matt Hayes 04:50

And back to the invitation coach huff threw out at the very beginning, saying he wants all

alumni from everywhere to be here for that opening games are opening long game at the gym this fall. So, everybody put that on your calendar. Let's get excited. Let's get fired up. Let's get behind coach huff and his staff and our student athletes and make this a great season.

K Kasey Stevens 05:10

For sure. If you guys watched the Super Bowl on Sunday, we had a Marshall great coach in that game. He coached the legendary Tom Brady. Byron Leftwich incredible season.

L Larry Crum 05:22

The for the fun thing about Byron left, which is he was the quarterback while I was a student here at Marshall. So I got to see him. My son, whenever it was his senior year, I traveled to every one of the away games, went to all the home games, I got to see him play. So there was nobody more excited than me to see him actually out there guiding the Tampa Bay Buccaneers and, you know, he kind of had a little bit of help with someone named Tom Brady. I don't know if you've ever heard of him. Never heard of him. You know, my wife is a humongous Patriots fan. So she wasn't very happy to see Tom Brady on a in a different uniform. But, man, I was excited to see Byron win a Super Bowl ring and guide that team and what a dominating performance they had.

M Matt Hayes 06:02

Absolutely. And thinking about the the press coverage that followed the Super Bowl, all the props that bright Byron got from the commentators in the press. It was so impressive and so wonderful to see that such a classy guy, just son of Marshall in the spotlight like that. He has had a fantastic career as a player. And it's amazing what he's going to be able to do as a coach. So kudos Byron, we're so proud of you, brother.

L Larry Crum 06:30

I don't know if you saw Tony Romo and some of the CBS guys they pointed out that the head coach of the Buccaneers, Bruce Arians, he actually said that he probably wouldn't have taken this job. If he didn't have Byron come with him to the Buccaneers. I remember how they pointed that out. That was it was just such a nice thing. And it's just neat to see, you know how far Byron's come and, you know, he's got some big things coming for him. I see him as a head coach somewhere very soon. Absolutely.



Kasey Stevens 06:56

They often say you can either play or coach, but I think Byron might have broken that mold for us. So moving on to a few more on campus topics. Students were given Federal Emergency Relief Fund money this semester, to help with offsetting costs due to the Coronavirus. What do you guys think about that, and that benefiting our students?



Larry Crum 07:17

I think it's just, it's, it's well needed, I feel so bad for the students. You know, there's nothing about there's nothing like, you know, like the college experience on campus. And a lot of them weren't able to be on campus this past year because of the pandemic and, you know, anything to help them out is, is is great. And I just think this is a awesome move. And hopefully, this helps out and helps us moving forward.



Matt Hayes 07:40

Absolutely. He said it best Larry, you know, the students had such a disruption, you know, especially the ones that, you know, had their senior year of high school, basically stripped away, you know, and they didn't have all the the typical customary rites of passage during their their senior year transitioning into the college experience. very unfortunate. But you know, there's a host of other circumstances and a cascade of issues that come associated with this pandemic situation and how it impacts students. And this is this relief will hopefully mean a great deal to a lot of our students and help kind of bridge that gap till things get back on a normal playing field.



Kasey Stevens 08:26

And hopefully, that means a lot of our students can stay with us rather than returning home or not finishing their degree programs. Another initiative that has happened this semester to help students out is the Tyler Childers Scholarship Program. If you guys have gotten to take a look at this, Tyler Childers was contracted by Paramount I believe to record an album this year or in 2020 and ended up saying I will record the whole album by myself in my basement and I will donate the money. So part of that is going to what he's called the Hickman Holler Appalachian relief fund to help bring quite a mouthful, right? He wants to bring awareness and financial support for philanthropic efforts in the Appalachian region. And that includes scholarship programs for students at Marshall.



Larry Crum 09:16

I am for anything that gives the help students out they really like we talked about what the pandemic and everything that's been going on anything that that brings more more money to Marshall and helps the students out um, Canada can argue about that.

K

Kasey Stevens 09:30

It's right for sure. Also, speaking on the university side, Marshall made a pledge recently to go plastic free by 2026, how do you guys see that shaking out?

M

Matt Hayes 09:43

I don't know. I mean, you know, you're used to go into chick fil a over here at the student center, you know, you get your diet lemonade or your or your you know, whatever. We're going to have to learn some new ways of, of enjoying our favorite beverages, but you No, it's the right thing to do. I really believe it's the right thing to do. And I'm glad to see Marshall take a stand.

L

Larry Crum 10:05

Yeah, it's a step in the right direction. I've loved a lot of the initiatives that President Gilbert's had to take the university forward. And this is just another thing that is just going to help everybody in the end. That's right.

K

Kasey Stevens 10:17

Speaking of moving forward, the aviation school is really taking off, I hear. There started to be some positions posted on the website, for professors in those departments and getting all of that set up. I read a cool story today about an alumnus donated his personal aircraft that he built 20 years ago, to the program for students to learn on. As a student, would you guys have been interested in that program?

M

Matt Hayes 10:43

My goodness, for sure. Absolutely. Yeah. Yeah, I still am as a as an alumnus, you know, is it too late for an old guy to learn how to fly a plane? Let's give it a shot.

L

Larry Crum 10:54

I mean, I was pretty excited when it popped up. And I was pretty excited to hear about this. I mean, I don't have any plans laying around to donate. But I mean, more power to

the to the folks that are helping out this program. I think there's a lot of excitement around it. And yeah, it's just great for the university.

M

Matt Hayes 11:09

It truly is an exciting time to be part of the Marshall family and to be here to have had the opportunity to experience all these great things that are happening,

K

Kasey Stevens 11:18

And that the flight school portion of that will be located at Yeager airport in Charleston, and the maintenance program will be located at Huntington Tri-State airport here in Huntington. Now, that wraps us up for today's alumni staff discussion. Stay tuned for our interview with Marshall alumnus, Courtney Charles.

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Larry Crum 11:39

Check out the all new HerdAlum.com your home for everything Marshall. HerdAlum.com has everything you need to keep in touch with your alma mater, including the latest alumni events and news from your alumni association. HerdAlum.com you can learn about alumni chapters and how to get involved in your community. Also, check out the latest membership benefits including discounts on everything from travel to dining, and keep in touch with classmates and friends. Log on to HerdAlum.com today to update your information and stay up to date on the latest from campus. HerdAlum.com, your home for everything Marshall. Hi, everybody. This is Larry Crum. We are here with Courtney Charles, the Vice President of basketball franchise operations for the Raptors 905 g league team. What a what a mouthful. So, Courtney, let's let's start, you know, right at the top, you have a really fascinating job. Tell us a little bit about what you do.

C

Courtney Charles 12:35

Yeah, I think it definitely is a mouthful, because at some point, I've definitely been with the organization, I've definitely seen things over the years. So I am hoping to take some of this experience and and hopefully we can call it expertise to really just manage not only our franchise of developing our players, but developing our staff, and really trying to grow the game across Canada. So we are the only g league team that is based in in Canada and playing outside of the US and and at some point we take pride in that and when we want to run this as a full blown business that's that's that's trying to be profitable and trying to make sure it's in the community and doing a lot of these things. So it's something that I oversee the entire operation side of it, but also want to win on the court as well and have

championships so there's a lot there and a lot to do but we've got a great team and we recently just won franchise of the year. John Wiggins who's now with the Toronto Raptors in a role of inclusion and diversity. He is you know, complements to to running this franchise before me and and and and set the bar where it is today and we just continue to hope to to win it for many more years to come.

L

Larry Crum 13:54

It sounds like you know with your position you have a lot of your hand in a lot of buckets I mean on the court, off the court talk a little bit about you know, for the average person you know what all you do talk about what your your position entails what all your you're involved in not only with the main franchise the Raptors but obviously with the nano five g league team.

C

Courtney Charles 14:16


Yeah, there's there's many, many departments and like I touched on a few of them, you know, we want to, we want to be the best franchise possible. So obviously, there's there's a ton of exposure from a marketing and a brand standpoint, there's an opportunity to have great partners. And to build relationships. We just signed a great deal with the YMCA, which is very relatable to everybody and we've got a partnership with them. That's going to help really keep people motivated, especially during times like this. But we also want to get our players to be the best players possible. We want them to be players on the G league team that get to grow and learn that can then get a call Be part of our NBA team and win championships there as well. And we've been able to do that so far. So now we've got to keep it going. And we've got to develop to the point that we're winning as many championships as possible. And then we want to develop staff, you know, Nick Nurse is a ex coach of the G League, which was the D league when he was coaching, not to date him. But, you know, we want to show that this is not just something for players, it's something for staff, but not just coaching staff, it could be you know, cheerleaders, it could be broadcasters, it could be different roles, ticketing, you know, these are opportunities for everybody, as long as this game continues to grow.

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Larry Crum 15:45

Now, obviously, the pandemic has shifted a lot of things this past year was, was different for everybody. And, you know, the regular world professional sports. And then, of course, this year, it's shifted the way you all have approached this year. And I understand you know, you're in Orlando right now talk a little bit about the preparations between, you know, the unknowns of last year, where we didn't really know what was going on to a little


bit of an offseason, where you had a chance, you know, the whole league had a chance to come together and talk about, you know, what is it we're going to do, and the season ahead, what you're all doing to keep players safe, and how this season is going for you guys?

 Courtney Charles 16:21

Well compliments to the NBA. And obviously, the G League, you know, during these times, we were able to still have a season, we were able to crown a NBA champion for 2019-20. And that's an accomplishment in itself, there was a lot of things that weren't able to function and still be executed during the pandemic. But the NBA is really found a way to be safe and to have people have the opportunity of doing what it is they love. And you know, the G league has now taken that opportunity of learning from the NBA bubble, which happened during the summer of 2020. And we've now applied it here in Orlando on Walt Disney's property, and you know, it, it's a, it's a first class service, I take my hat off to them, the housing setup, the meals, the testing, every day, everything is done at a high level that, you know, at some point, we feel really safe, and we feel that we're capable of doing our job, and we're still able to entertain our community and our countries, as everyone is still watching. And people obviously get to play and I get to do what it is I love. So it's it's worked out knowing that a lot of things have not worked out during these times. And it's something that we're very thankful for. And we're very happy to, to motivate and encourage people to realize there's there's reasons to keep pushing on and to realize that there. There are going to be some hard times but we'll get through it and we'll get.

 17:51

Sure, so, you know, there's a lot of young men and young women growing up that that the idea of working in professional sports is such a such a great thing, you know, that they work towards it, and it's just a dream. And you're you're getting to live out that dream. Talk about how you got into professional sports, And is that something you always wanted to do?

 Courtney Charles 18:11

Well, there I think it's, it's really interesting on when you try to figure out where you found your unique niche, knowing that you are a young person, just growing, willing to do whatever it takes to be the best person you can be. And for me, I really, you know, want to compliment, you know, martial, and every university that has sports programs and, and, and every coach that is given back and for every athlete that participates, for me sports

was the way of learning that I needed to be better as a person, you know, you can go to a math class, and you can, you know, do really well or not do well. And you'll you'll know there's learning, you know, you'll say hey, teacher, can you give me some more this is pretty easy. Or you'll say Can I get some extra help you're learning it's not that you're not learning but you may not have a math interest you may not have you know English as an English as something you want to learn more and get in depth with it. You know, in Canada, we do French. In the US, it's normally Spanish. So at some point, I could always say I would rather learn Spanish than French. But the one thing I did realize was I was a competitor when it came to sports. I wanted to be the best and if I wasn't I would go research I would go study and I would go try to find out how I could do it and and what it took to do it and that made me then realize how important the math was and how important the English was. So for me it was really just you know, the first time that I got to be competitive and the first time someone told me I couldn't Something It was kind of the the the drive that came. And then as you started growing up and you see the different professions, I started seeing the opportunity of having a talent and applying it to sports. Obviously I wanted to be an athlete. But then you also saw the people behind the scenes that worked with the athletes are motivated the athletes or challenged the athletes. And that's when I started realizing that there was an opportunity to go into this world. And thank goodness, there were sport programs to go into this world. And that's, you know, where Marshall gets it shout out because at that time, there were not many universities as I date myself, offering master for programs.



Larry Crum 20:48

Fantastic. Well, we're joined today by Courtney Charles, the Vice President of basketball and franchise operations for the Raptors 905 G. Team. Courtney, let's rewind to that young kid growing up in Toronto, did you ever dream that you would be where you are today?



Courtney Charles 21:03

Yeah, I would be lying. If I could say I've dreamt this far. You know, I can honestly say when I was growing up a scholarship to the US was kind of the big dream. At that point, you know, you want to be Michael Jordan, but you have no idea what that means. And, and, and I still don't, because he keeps setting the bar so high. I'm still I'm still a little bit off on even seeing how far he's come not knowing that. Being a young person, I remember wanting to be the best I remember wanting to be an Olympian. As track and field was my my first passion and talent to say, and then I remembered wanting to be a basketball player. And then I wanted a scholarship. And then once I got to the US, from Canada, I can say I definitely dreamt bigger, there's there's much more competition, there's many

more people that want what you want. And that's when I realized, I'm dreaming too small. I've got to dream bigger. I can't be happy with just getting a scholarship, I've got to think now we'll get your job and having a career and making a certain amount of money and traveling and doing different things. Because that at some point, I only knew Canada. And I can be honest, Canada was pretty cool. So I didn't think I needed her no more, much more. But I'm glad that I haven't been able to see the world and, and see more than what I dreamt.



Larry Crum 22:37

So before working in the G League, you know, you were the director of basketball operations, and player development for the Raptors themselves. What did that entail?



Courtney Charles 22:46

So that was a little bit more exclusive to just making sure the players have the resources that they needed, on and off the court. And, and it was something where I wanted to be so selfless to make sure that they were the ones to grow as much as possible. And and during the time you do it more, because that's who you are. But I'm glad that I did it that way. Because at some point, my relationship with them grew. And that's how I got to where I am today. really putting them first person and putting my dreams and my goals aside to make sure that our players were able to get their dreams and goals was really, really something that took a lot of hard work, you know, you've got up to you know, 17 players on a team at any time, and you're trying to make sure that they all can succeed. Yeah, there's not enough minutes for everybody. There's only one basketball. And at some point, you're providing resources for the mall. But they're not all at the same level, they all don't have the same interest. They're all coming from different backgrounds. So for me, it was really to make sure that I found a way for them to be relatable and understandable to coach so he knew how to challenge them and how to work with them. I wanted our front office to really find a way to understand who it is that they have drafted or they're going to be going to seek out as a free agent. And then I wanted all the other departments to have a great and look inside look to who our players were. So I would do whatever it is I could so ticketing could understand what it is they're selling with this one player and what our global partnership group could do to try to find the right company to put with the right player and and our community group to make sure guys we're giving back and to make sure that they had a passion for what it is they were doing. So it consisted of a lot of what I do now, but it was very player driven. Now we are very business driven, but still have player interest to make sure that they're getting to the next level which is the NBA from the G league for them.



Larry Crum 24:58

Sure. You know you talk about that one ball, limited minutes, talk about what it takes to manage the personalities of these larger than life nba stars that everybody sees on sports center, and just wonders, how is it dealing with with them and trying to manage that.



Courtney Charles 25:16

It's one of those things where it's bittersweet, you know, I can, I can say it's, it's, it's tough, it's hard. But I can also say it's very rewarding. And it's worth all the effort. And it's worth all the patience that is taken to get to know people, I think, you know, we're at a time in the world where humanity is something that we have to not take for granted. If they weren't basketball players, I would still try to help them. Right? If they weren't, not all the make it, right. Not all them are all stars, not all them will will championships, some of them will end up in Europe, I stay in touch with them, I still help them as young men who are trying to navigate this thing called life. So for me, the reward is to meet people through basketball, and to help educate them through basketball. And then to help them along their journey for as long as they can play for as long as they can coach. And for as long as they can produce in this game and grow this game. We've got, we've got a long way to grow in Canada with the game of basketball when compared to the US. But we have a long way to grow with making sure everyone can come play this game, and everybody feels entitled, and everybody has the opportunity. And for me, that's kind of the bigger dream now, which is Yeah, you're really good. But are you working well with your teammate? And have you helped your family understand hard work? And have you pushed others that don't do basketball that may play another sport? You know, I think a quick shout out to Kobe Bryant rest in peace, but he's driven women that play basketball, you know, and and yes, he had a daughter who was playing and but he still did more than he then then some others do. And hopefully that has now allowed people to realize the amount of work that goes into to this game.



Larry Crum 27:11

I love it. What a great story. You know, when we talked previously, your total fun story about when you first started with the Raptors kind of being thrown to the fire. kind of you know, right out the gate, experiencing what it's like in the world of professional sports with so much turnover and people coming and going. tell tell that story again, for our alumni viewers listening at home? What it was like those first few days on the job to just be thrown straight into the fire.

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Courtney Charles 27:41


Yeah, I'll start with, I was a older intern who had his master's degree from Marshall University. And I say that because I had to be very humble, in a position that I felt I had earned more than even the internship, right. And I think that's the part of life where people talk about biases, and they talk about equal equity and equality. I came in as this really fired up hungry, ready to go young man, thinking, you know, I need to see it all and I'm ready to learn. And I get, I get humbled really quick, because the person who's hired me, and the person I'm looking to learn from, has now been told he is no, you know, he's been removed of his duties, right? And you never know what that's gonna be like for you. You know, I remember being in university and someone says, you will be fired from a job in your lifetime. You know, I remember learning that in school. And it's like, well, I like how's that gonna happen. And here I am in my dream world. And the person I'm looking to lead me has now just told me he's been fired. And you you scramble, you know, you, you realize that you're not as ready as you thought you were, and you're not as prepared as you thought you were because somebody new might be coming. You expectations may arise. And I honestly don't know the sport yet. You know, I don't know the business. So it was one of the things where you had to really get back to the core of who you are and be ready to work hard, and be ready to lock in and to be ready to take direction from who the new leader will be. And I shared this on nba.com the other day with Carlan Gay, Gay, who's a great writer. Mr. Embry was unbelievable. In manning or ship, you know, he was our senior consultant at the time. And and when they let Rob go, they kind of said, you know, Wayne, you'll oversee this until we hired a new person and he I had such great experiences, and he was so calm. And he was inspirational to me believing that I'm still in a good place, put in the work, and it will all come together in the end, and not to get comfortable, and to not settle on not, you know, giving 100% because you just never know what the next obstacle can be. Which could, you know, be another change, or it could be a new prisoner coming in, that makes changes. And I've definitely seen changes in my time.

L

Larry Crum 30:32

You know, from watching those first few days where, you know, your world was kind of flipped upside down to winning an NBA championship with the Toronto Raptors. And in 2019, that must have been thrilling for you to be able to be a part of the parade and the pomp and everything that goes with winning an NBA title. You know, a lot of people dream of getting to professional sports, you got there, and you got to win a title, talk about that experience, an NBA title, it's something that you definitely dream, you know, of doing that. But again, you have no idea how it's gonna happen, you have no idea what that experience is. And I've shared this as, as we've had our conversation before, Larry, I was never a person to really celebrate, I'm not really a materialistic type person. But you know what, you're right. When you when you get on a job, and your boss gets fired, and

you and you feel like you're not going to ever see a year in a position. Because there could be somebody new coming in, and they can say, you know, we're gonna get somebody else to finally get there and to be able to host that, that trophy up in the air, and to be able to say that I am a champion, along with all of these beautiful people that have put in the work. It's so refreshing. And it's so rewarding to the amount of unknowns that you had to go through to get there. So many unknowns, you know, and, and that's why we have to be positive during these times of this pandemic, and not knowing the future. But if you put in the hard work, and if you listen and do what you need to do, you'll realize you'll be celebrating at the end of it even more, because you'll realize that it took a lot of work, but we got there and celebrate we did. That's fantastic. Again, we're talking today with Courtney Charles, the Vice President of basketball and franchise operations, for the rafter not of G league team. Let's bring a little closer to home for our alumni listening. Bring it back to your time at Marshall, you came here with the track and field, you know, organization, talk about your Marshall experience what brought you here and you know, talk a bit about why you were here.

 Courtney Charles 32:48

Yeah, I think I had actually graduated from Luce University and went back home to Canada and I actually got a job and I was almost living out that dream of like, being able to go from one thing to another end, keep it keep it flowing and have it going in a good pace. But to be honest, I was missing sports, you know, I wasn't working in sports, I was working in retail. And I was okay with that, because it was paying. And, and to be honest, sports is not always the thing that's gonna pay you. Sometimes people don't realize you've got to be the athlete, the President or the GM, everybody else is not making money. But I was able to get back home to Canada, which I had missed. I'd been in the US for about five, five and a bit years. And I was missing home. So I got home got to retail. And I had an opportunity from a fellow Canadian who, Frances, used to work at Marshall as the women's sprint coach. And she she had seen me run and had none of my experience with the US side and really thought that I could be an asset and build a program where I could also get my master's degree at the same time. So for me, it was it was really an opportunity to get back into sports and to get back into coaching, and to really see how I could develop a little bit more of the business mindset and to prepare myself maybe for an executive role, which, thankfully, I am in today. So it was one of those opportunities where Marshall gave me the opportunity to come back. And I was able to come to a program and and be able to see sports done at a very high level. You know, the track team had lost its boys track team, the men's track team because of Title Nine. But the football program was a perfect example of what sports does for a community and what sports does on a on a large scale. You know, this is a program that is in a smaller market and is smaller this and smaller, but our program is huge. It's big. It's massive, right.

So it was it was a perfect thing for me to start seeing on how I could learn, and I could grow. And I could start taking some of this and apply it. And Marshall did all of that for me. And I'm thankful and grateful.



Larry Crum 35:13

You know, you said many times that Marshall, you know, help pave the way for your career, how so?



Courtney Charles 35:20

Kind of like what I just touched on, it was able to give me the the mindset that not everything happens in all of these perfect scenarios, right? It doesn't have to be perfect weather, and it doesn't have to be in the most populated city. And it doesn't have to be the most, you know, the most enrollment, right? Oh, back in back when I was at Marshall, you had maybe about 16,000 in enrollment, and you end up averaging 35,000 people at a game, you know, in a town of 60,000. So to me, if you do the math, that's really some there's some great marketing, some great support, right. But it's a it's a program that people believe in. And it's something that teaches you, it brings everybody together in sports, it's something that shows you if you put a business mindset to it, if you treat the kids Well, if they're learning and growing, you've had a ton of talent come through from not only a football basketball side, the coach of the men's team now is a is a great one and is and it has a family name. So these are all things that when the university displays what it is that you should be thriving for, it only helps set the bar for what you need to go try to achieve. And I felt that Marshall did a great job of that for me.



Larry Crum 36:43

Sure, you know, in your current position, you do a lot of volunteer work, work with the community, work with the youth talk about you know that that drive that you have for I mean, not only working with the players, but you know, working with the youth and the community around your organization.



Courtney Charles 36:59

Well, you know, what it started with the players, you know, we talked about Rob Babcock, you know, rest in peace, he, one of the first thing I had asked him when I got hired if I if I could go to the hospital visit with the players, because I really wanted to see how that interaction happened, and how the, you know, the people in the hospital could really be uplifted and to really, you know, feel like they've had somebody special come through.

And what I learned from that was, it didn't have to be a basketball player, it could have been anybody that wanted to come spend time with somebody that's not doing their best, you know, and and that, for me is the reason now that I try to give back as much as I can. Because there's always somebody that needs to be up lifted just a little bit. And there's somebody that needs to be told they need to dream big, just even a little bigger. Right? I can honestly tell you, we've had a conversation here already, Larry, and we're talking about dreaming big. And how far did I dream when you get to be on the Walt Disney property. And you get to see a lot of the different properties and the different things that it does. It reminds you that you need to dream big, Walt was big. This is an establishment that dreams big. And that's why we're able to be here, because they built the buildings, they have the infrastructure, they have these things all set up. Because they were thinking bigger. And that's what we need to do for our youth, our youth need bigger so that they can be better people, and that they end up helping the ones after them.



Larry Crum 38:37

So what's next for Courtney Charles, what's the next chapter in your career?



Courtney Charles 38:42

Well, the next chapter is to win our next game, which is tomorrow. And then we have a back to back. So we're playing two in a row, so we'll win that one next. But then, you know, let's win this G league championship. And let's build this team again to come back in the next season and get through this pandemic and hopefully get fans back in a building. And let's try to win one in front of fans. And then I'll probably start challenging myself to then see if I can, you know, move up in another rank and try to you know, get on to a to another team where I manage more and have a different expectation of maybe trying to take a team that's not winning. And and and and help them win and eventually get to an NBA team and be an NBA president. So the dreaming is is not done. There's a lot more to go. Let's continue to grow this game. Let's continue to grow sports in general. Let's continue to have people be motivated to stay healthy and stay in shape. And then let's also grow and motivate people to be nice to everyone and to be cordial and so forth.



Larry Crum 39:51

Sure. Well I love that one an inspiration. And you know we've gotten to know the Courtney on the court. The Courtney that went to Marshall. Now let's get to the little no A little bit more about you, we have a couple of questions here. Just a couple quick, random questions for you. We're just gonna list down through here and you just let me know, favorite color.

C Courtney Charles 40:11
I'm an all black guy, you know, I'm all black. I love my cars black. I like to wear all black clothing. I don't have much of a color, really. So just black.

L Larry Crum 40:25
What was your favorite class while you're at Marshall?

C Courtney Charles 40:28
To be honest, I loved them all Mman. I can't say I liked one only I think when I got a chance to do sports, marketing as a master's degree, I can honestly say that was like one of the first time in life that I was able to say, can't wait for the next class. Can't wait for this next day. So to be honest, I'm not going to, I'm not going to pick one because I want people to realize you can find a passion in something and everything will be fun about it.

L Larry Crum 41:00
Did you have a favorite professor or anyone while you were attending Marshall that just kind of stands out to you?

C Courtney Charles 41:06
Well, I've got to give a couple shout outs here. Um, you know, for me, Dr. Mak was a newer, appointed teacher at that time. And with her being new and me being International, I definitely felt like I was able to, you know, talk to her about the class and be able to talk about Marshall a little bit and talk about her experience being in the US. And then I have to give a huge shout out to Mary Clark, who is no longer at Marshall, but she used to work in the Student Services. area. And she really helped a lot of students. But she also helped me, you know, not only as a student, but also as a professional working with the women's track team. And to really getting me to, to where I am. And then obviously, our track coaches are unbelievable. We've named the arena after our coach here. And Frances, obviously, who brought me there was key.

L Larry Crum 42:21
You know, this next question almost isn't fair for a man living at Disney World. What's your favorite place to vacation?



Courtney Charles 42:29

Um, well, you know, not that, you know, I don't think Walt would be upset if I say it's not here. But I've got to be honest, I think I was able to travel a little bit, I've been able to see the world. But I do love the islands. I am a person that loves the heat at a very high temperature. And, and my father is from a small island called Antigua. And I think Antigua establishes a lot of the things that I like in life, which is very simple, very, very polite and cordial people. And then I think the other place that I have been able to visit an experience that I kind of came away just really enjoying it just as much as it is Hawaii.



Larry Crum 43:18

Awesome. I can't imagine you're probably not missing all this winter weather up in Toronto being down in Orlando. Next question, what's the favorite? What's your favorite thing about your career?



Courtney Charles 43:28

The people will always be the people. You know, always seeing a new young player that wants to be the best seeing a player who has played 13 to 15 years and and realize now that they want to talk about what's next. As they never wanted to before seeing the player 20 years later, because now I've done that, and seeing him say thank you for helping me through my career. And thank you for for helping me after. So for me, it's really the people. Favorite music artist. I'm a reggae artist. And I would say you know, Bob Marley is is the one who has kind of set the tone not only through his music, but also through his actions. So I'm good with Bob Marley. How about favorite movie? You know what? Ah, that's a good one. Um, I'm gonna have to go with like Gladiator. You know, I think I think it's a I think it's just one of those things where you just have to find the motivation to make sure you you just keep doing what you have to do to move on and be the best, you know.



Larry Crum 44:38

Sure. Favorite book.



Courtney Charles 44:41

That's a good one too. Huh? Let's give a shout out to Barack on his book that he just did.



Larry Crum 44:52

Alright, favorite animal? Are you an Animal Man?



Courtney Charles 44:56

That's a that's a good one. Because I was not I was not big on animals growing up, but I now have a Doberman. So really, he will now become one of my favorites. But I will also say if I ever had something like an animal that I looked at it and was like, Hmm, interesting, I would say a lion.



Larry Crum 45:17

I wouldn't. I'm sure you've seen the always at the Tiger King or whatever. I'm sure owning one of those will be a little interesting. Last one favorite song.



Courtney Charles 45:27

I would say Bob Marley One love, one love.



Larry Crum 45:31

Well Courtney. Listen, I can't thank you enough for joining us today. Is there anything else you want to add?



Courtney Charles 45:36

No, I again, like I said, Larry, I appreciate all that you do, keeping in touch with the alumni giving us opportunities to, to share our stories and to give back to the community and to hopefully help not only a teacher and a coach, but also to help our student athletes in our in our in our students of the school. Just be inspired to keep moving on and to push on. I can't believe it's you know, it's it's it's over? What am I now 2021. So it's over, you know, almost 15 years that I've been at Marshall. And those are the things that you can never dream, you can never dream, what 15 years later of your experience will be and and and this is to let everyone know, you'll get through it. You'll push through, but put in the work now. So you get all the education and all the things you need for the 15 years later. Because not everybody wants to go back and shouldn't have to if they've done everything they needed to do the first time. So I appreciate it all and I'm here to continue to support and help in any way that I can.



Larry Crum 46:47

And what a story, Courtney Charles Marshall alumnus and vice president of basketball operations and franchise operations for the Raptors. Thank you so much for joining us and have a great day. Thank you, Larry. Appreciate it All the best to you and your family. Stay safe and healthy. You too.



Matt Hayes 47:04

Looking for a great deal. With our newest partnership, finding a great deal just got easier for martial alumni. Download the my deals app link your alumni account and browse great deals on hotels, restaurants, gym memberships, auto service, entertainment and more. Save big on deals for brands like apple, Reebok and GMC. Marshall alumni can register for an account by visiting [hurt alarm.com](http://hurtalarm.com). Click on membership and benefits and select the shop tab and start saving today.



Kasey Stevens 47:35

Thanks so much for tuning in to today's episode of One of the Herd. We hope you enjoyed this episode. And if so, leave us a review on Apple podcasts. We are so grateful for the support of all of our alumni who helped make this pilot episode happen. If you have an idea for an episode, let us know by emailing us at alumni@marshall.edu. Follow us on Facebook @MUAlumni, Twitter, @herdalumni, or on Instagram @MU_alumni intro and outro media provided by RHVBARB on Pond5.